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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 2 November 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of the intensification of the illegal Israeli settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which has been reaffirmed by recent provocative declarations by Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister. In this regard, it is shockingly clear that the recent decision announced by the Israeli Government of its intention to accelerate settlement activities, including the construction of at least 2,000 new settlement units in Occupied East Jerusalem, is a retaliatory measure being undertaken by the occupying Power to collectively punish the Palestinian people and their leadership following the admittance of Palestine as a Member State to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 31 October 2011.

There can be no question that Israel, the occupying Power, is deliberately pursuing this illegal colonization campaign to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and particularly Occupied East Jerusalem, in order to entrench the occupying Power's presence and its control of the lands it has occupied since June 1967 in order to facilitate its unlawful de facto annexation and prejudge the outcome of negotiations between the two sides. Now, it is also clear that the occupying Power is using this illegal practice as an aggressive punitive measure in what can be viewed as the Israeli Government's official version of the repugnant "price tag" policy so viciously used by the illegal Israeli settlers against the Palestinian people and their property. The result: in tandem, the Israeli Government and its settlers are not only destroying the contiguity and integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but accelerating the destruction of the peace process and of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

This unlawful and destructive Israeli settlement campaign must be stopped if we are to salvage the prospects for achieving the Security Council's vision of two States of Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized

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borders on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. Israel's absolute and deliberate contempt for international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, the Quartet road map and the firm position of the international community on this matter must not go without consequence. Only determined and clear action by the international community, including the Security Council, can send the necessary message to the occupying Power of the global rejection of this illegal campaign and the demand for it to stop immediately and completely.

The Palestinian leadership thus calls on the Security Council to uphold its responsibilities under the Charter, to uphold its resolutions on this critical issue and to act forthwith to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its illegal actions. Israel's illegal activities and incessant aggression, violation and provocations against the Palestinian people and their leadership are raising tensions and destabilizing the situation on the ground, clearly threatening peace and security in our region, with undeniable consequences for international peace and security. It is thus the duty of the Council to urgently and appropriately address this issue.

Israel's defiance of the law and of the international community cannot continue to go unaddressed. It is the failure to hold Israel accountable for this defiance that has allowed it to persist with the impunity that has deepened the conflict and undermined all efforts to resume the peace process, including the recent efforts by the Quartet members in this regard. Moreover, it has ensured that Palestine's cooperation with the efforts to revive negotiations between the two sides on the basis of clear parameters and its commitment to the long-agreed terms of reference for the peace process, continue to be met only by Israeli violations, provocations and incitement. In this regard, I must also draw your attention to the decision of Israel to withhold the transfer of funds to the Palestinian National Authority, also as a punishment for the recent steps in UNESCO. These funds are monies collected by the occupying Power in the form of duties on goods that must transit through ports controlled by Israel and are destined for Palestinian markets, and the occupying Power is in no way entitled to those funds or to their obstruction. As in the past, we firmly reject this form of retaliation and collective punishment and call on Israel to release all Palestinian funds forthwith.

In closing, we stress that Palestine's application and admission to membership in UNESCO is consistent with its commitment to and respect for the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and the principles enshrined therein and our commitment to the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. We reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the independence of their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and reaffirm the legal, natural and historic right of our State of Palestine to take its rightful place among the community of nations. We appeal to the Security Council and all Member States of the General Assembly to stand by Palestine at this critical juncture and to uphold their legal obligations to ensure the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and to ensure an end to this conflict and the achievement of peace and security for Palestine, Israel and the Middle East region as a whole.

Indeed, a viable and definitive solution to the conflict can only be achieved on the basis of international legitimacy and justice and never on the fleeting power of might over right. The Security Council must uphold its duties in this regard.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 409 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since

28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 November 2011 (A/ES-10/537-S/2011/676) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations